Rohini Satellite being launched by ASLV is fabricated at ISRO Satellite Centre, Bangalore.

U.S. proposal to hold Conference on making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace without their participation

976. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of U. S. have proposed that the long-delayed conference on making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace be held without the USA's participation;

(b) whether the Government of India have opposed such a move; and

(c) if the answers to parts (a) and (b) be in the affirmative what steps the Government of India are contemplating to take to sort out the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) While no formal proposal has been made by the United States delegation that the long-delayed conference on the Indain Ocean be held without participation of the United States a recent statement by the U.S. representative in the *Ad-hoc* Commmittee on the Indian Ocean has hinted at such a possibility.

(b) and (c) The Government of India have all along held that the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of peace should be attended by the great powers and major maritime users as fell as the littoral and hinterland States. A conference without the participation of the great powers and major maritime users would be meaningless. India has consistently urged the concerned States to display the necessary political will and the cooperate actively in fulfilling the aspirations of the littoral and hinterland States for establishing a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean. Consultations among concerned members of the UN *Ad-hoc* Committee have been continuing recently in the context of the formulation of a consensus draft resolution on this subject to be placed before the 40th Session of the U.N. General Assembly.

Illegal felling of trees in and around Jodhpur

977. SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the West Rajasthan Chapter of INTACH complained about indiscriminate and illegal felling of trees in and around Jodhpur;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government have conducted any investigation in the matter; and

(d) what remedial steps are being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI VIR SEN): (a) No such complaint has been received by the Government.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Scientific Committee on Antartical Research

978. SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has become a member of the Scientific Committee on Antarctica Research;

(b) if so from which date;

(c) what steps Government are taking to establish a permanent research station in the Antarctica; and

(d) what additional equipment are being considered for augmenting our research capability in the Antarctica?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT ATOMIC ENERGY, SPACE